

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1247
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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DEPT PASS DOT FOR ALLEN TPI-42

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TGEN, ETRN, US, UR
SUBJECT: US-USSR TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT: ICE-TRANSITING VESSELS
(05.0502)

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. ACCOUNTS OF THE VOYAGE OF THE SOVIET NUCLEAR-POWERED ICEBREAKER "ARKITKA" HAVE FLOODED THE SOVIET PRESS SINCE AUGUST 17, WHEN THE SOVIET UNION CLAIMED THAT THE NEW ICEBREAKER REACHED THE NORTH POLE, THE FIRST SURFACE SHIP TO DO SO. THE "ARKTIKA'S" DRAMATIC ACHIEVEMENT ADDS ADDITIONAL LUSTER TO THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AS WELL AS BOLSTERS THE IMAGE OF SOVIET SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AT A TIME WHEN EVEN BREZHNEV HAS COMMENTED ON ITS SHORTCOMINGS. THE "ARKTIKA" IS THE SECOND SOVIET NUCLEAR ICEBREAKER (THE "LENIN", WHICH WAS COMMISSIONED IN THE 1950'S, IS THE FIRST) TO ENTER SERVICE. IN HER MAIDEN ARCTIC VOYAGES IN MARCH AND APRIL OF THIS YEAR, SHE LED SMALL CONVOYS FROM MURMANSK EAST TO THE YAMAL PENINSULA WHERE THE SOVIETS ARE DEVELOPING EXTENSIVE NATURAL GAS AND OIL FIELDS. EMPLOYMENT ALONG THE NORTHERN SEA ROUTE OF THE "ARKTIKA," AND OF HER SISTER SHIP, THE "SIBIR," WHICH IS FITTING OUT IN LENINGRAD, WILL ENHANCE SOVIET CAPABILITY TO MOVE LARGE AMOUNTS OF MEN AND MATERIEL TO

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NATURAL GAS AND OIL FIELDS SUCH AS THOSE ON THE YAMAL PENINSULA AND THUS HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE EXPLOITATION OF THE LARGE RESERVES OF NATURAL RESOURCES KNOWN TO BE LOCATED ALONG THE SOVIET ARCTIC OCEAN LITTORAL. END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. COMMENT - WHILE AS RECENTLY AS LAST WEEK SOVIET TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT CO-CHAIRMAN

ALEKSENKO REAFFIRMED TO SCICOUNS THAT THE US WOULD NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE SOVIET NUCLEAR ICEBREAKERS, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SOVIET TRUMPETING OF THE "ARKTIKA'S" ACHIEVEMENT PROVIDES THE US AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DEMARCHE. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE SOVIETS WILL CONTINUE TO BALK AT JOINT ACTIVITY IN THE ARCTIC ITSELF, E.G., THE NANESN DRIFT PROJECT, BUT THEY MAY BE MORE WILLING TO ALLOW US SPECIALISTS TO VISIT THEIR NUCLEAR ICEBREAKERS IN VIEW OF THE PROPAGANDA SURROUNDING THE "ARKTIKA'S" VOYAGE. FROM THE EMBASSY'S STANDPOINT, THE FORTH-COMING TRANSPORTATION JOINT COMMISSION MEETING OFFERS AN IDEAL AND APPROPRIATE FORUM IN WHICH TO BROACH THIS MATTER. WE SUGGEST THAT THE US POINT ONCE AGAIN THE LACK OF A SATISFACTORY SOVIET RESPONSE TO OUR EFFORTS TO INITIATE COOPERATIVE ACTIVITY ON THE ICE-TRANSITTING VESSEL PROJECT AND NOTE THAT SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO SHARE THEIR LATEST TECHNOLOGY IN THIS AREA BY PROVIDING ACCESS TO THE "ARKTIKA" AND TO THE "SIBIR" WILL MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE US TO JUSTIFY CONTINUATION OF OTHER MARITIME TRANSPORT COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES, FROM WHICH THE US HAS TO DATE RECEIVED LITTLE BENEFIT.

TOON

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 23-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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